

**Garage
Tabloid Culture
the Grunge Aesthetic
& soft wet earth**



Accommodation (2006)

Derrida: 'Visual art is a form of writing' (*Deconstruction Engaged*, 2001, p. 23).

The term *épatant* relates to the term flabbergast and involves startling or shocking readers and viewers through unconventional means (Collins, n.d., p. 511)—just as, I hope, this fractured and messy text has done. In fact, as a detour, as an aside, as a point of departure and disruption, this introduction, like the opening sentence, is also an *epexegetis*, which is to say that it is a collection of phrases, clauses, and sentences (a *bricolage*) assembled at the front of a text to provide further explanation, a preview, of what might follow (Collins, n.d., p. 512). It demonstrates something of the eclectic, curiosity-driven, and obsessive-compulsive methods (of body and mind) that activate my (re)search and textuality (my pedagondage). It privileges the much maligned *dilettante* and the craft (and delight) of *dilettantism*: the craft of dipping lightly into all manner of activities for both playful and mindful reasons, but not so deep as to get stuck. This is as much a pedagogical polemic (i.e. a fierce attack) as a way of being and *seeing*. It's about the—o—that has vanished from wherever and the—a—that has appeared in *différance* (Derrida, 1976; Ulmer, 1985). It raises more questions than answers and more confusion than clarity. It has no investment in expertise or being an expert. It professes a do-it-yourself (DIY) and Jack-and-Jill-of-all-trades (JOAT) attitude: a DIY-JOATIC (zygotic) *pragmosophy* (pragmatic philosophy) that blurs boundaries and crosses borders. It explores the nature of *being* (ontology), of *knowing* (epistemology), and of moral and aesthetic *valuing* (axiology) (Collins, n.d.). And why not?

dilettante *n.*, 1. a person whose interest in a subject is superficial rather than professional. 2. a person who loves the arts. [... to delight ...]

(Collins, n.d., p. 433)

I actually meant to start with an explanation of the term *exegesis*, which itself is a text that attempts to explain and critique other texts, especially scripture (Macquarie, 2006, p. 412). That being the case, let me name the artefacts I am constructing: (1) *The Ridiculous Madman* (started in 1999), (2) *The Manifesto* (started in 2006), and (3) *The Exegesis* (started in 2007), which I will now rename *The Eisegesis* (starting here) for reasons that will become apparent. These texts all explore, among other things, *bricolage*, *palimpsest*, and *intertextuality* (at the dilettante level), which in turn explore the complex networks of power and privilege that (co)operate and conflict in the 'text-production' process (logocentrism). All texts include, exclude, privilege, and erase other texts, discourses, voices, and media depending on the contexts, audiences, purposes, and ideologies of the maker, who is also subject to change,

Earlier you said it was started in 1997, you liar!

Text Products

Ethos

This project, as suggested, is not just about *creative writing*: it is about *producing art* and *constructing texts*. I am interested in the *doing* of textuality, the *experience* of text production, and the *products* that result. I want visual texts and stylistic features to figure as prominently as prose texts and verbal features. I want to follow the ideas and interests that emerge through the arts-based inquiry process rather than through predetermined research agendas. I want my research (and texts) to reflect the chaotic, chance-driven, episodic, and arbitrary nature of postmodern life while articulating and enacting *The Postmodern Pedagogage*. This text is built on accidents, misadventures, and chance.

Products

1. *Eis@Jesus*

I intend to create three text products as part of this study. The first text, the *Eis@Jesus*, will not so much 'explain' my creative products as 'generate' all three creative products. This represents a 'polemic' in its own right since the *Eis@Jesus* will not attempt to predetermine (and therefore limit) its own trajectory or that of the texts it hopes to inform. Rather, the *Eis@Jesus* will be an experimental meaning-making endeavour that acts as a manifesto and ideology for all three texts. It will 'try on' different theories and practices rather than merely explain them. The *Eis@Jesus* will take its form from the encyclopaedia, illuminated manuscript, scrapbook, travelogue, and hypertext, and articulate and enact *The Postmodern Pedagogage*



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"Today, in the world which some observers call 'post-modern' and some others 'late modern', dreams of a rationally flawless and aesthetically perfect order are no more in fashion..." (Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, 1995, p. 173).

There are 'continuing tensions between so-called critical-theoretical writing and creative writing, a tension that might have been defused for some by recent explorations in fictional or ficto-critical writing. When creative writing happens in the context of a literature course, its relation to the critical essay remains unsettled over questions of whether the creative writing serves to illuminate the critical, or exist in its own right as literature of a kind, or constitutes itself as a hybrid form' (Brophy, *Creativity*, 1998, p. 228).

sedition *n* speech, writing, or behaviour intended to encourage rebellion or resistance against the government.

(*Collins Australian Dictionary*, 2005, p. 744)

revision, and duplicity (my multiple me's). Yet most texts pass themselves off as natural, linear, and single-author product(ion)s, with no mention of the uncertainties at their core, such as authorial doubt (and/or idiocy). This introduction serves as an example of a text that I couldn't bring myself to erase. It does, however, display my *idiocy* (i.e. idiot, from Latin and Greek: "a private, non-professional, or ignorant person" [*Macquarie*, 2006, p. 593] who suffers from "senselessness" [*Collins*, n.d., p. 760]). I have let this text (?) be as messy, irascible, and flamboyant as my own editorial and colonial impulses would (will) allow. I did cut out more than I left behind. I did privilege the legible over the illegible. I did use sentences (a habit hard to break). I did, therefore, bow to convention and habit *in the end*. Even the most experimental and *seditions* aspects of this text are accessible only through the complicities and links it keeps with tradition and language. Otherwise it would slip beyond readability, beyond discourse, into oblivion. It needs the very codes and conventions it cuts, splices, and vulgarises for its own survival and legibility, for its own meaning. All graffiti needs allusion for its own recognition, and this type of graffiti (Italian: little scratches [*Collins*, n.d., p. 385]) is no exception. This text is therefore extremely conservative and hegemonic despite appearances. Its survival depends upon the allusions it makes (and the love it extends) to the language and conventions that feed and protect it. I am at their mercy, not the other way around.

There is no counter-act without an act to counter.

There is no counter-grain without a grain.

There is no anti-text without a text.

There is no me without you.

Not surprisingly, the term *épéeist* is even more relevant than I imagined. For it just so happens that the name *Andrew* (which is my forename) means broadsword (John, personal communication, 2003), which, unlike the *épée*, is a broad-bladed sword used for cutting rather than stabbing (*Collins Australian Compact Dictionary*, 2003, p. 105). The name *Andrew* is also related to the *New Testament*, for *Andrew* was one of

William: "The good of a book lies in its being read. A book is made up of signs that speak of other signs, which in their turn speak of things. Without an eye to read them, a book contains signs that produce no concepts; therefore it is dumb" (Eco, *The Name of the Rose*, 1980/1998, p. 396).

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Para-eclectic-al = compulsively-frenetic / beyond eclecticism

'Derrida's anti-books, at the same time that they work theoretically and thematically to subvert the final obstacle to grammatology – the meta-physics of logocentrism – also demonstrate a certain 'graphic rhetoric,' the essence of which is a double-valued Writing, ideographic and phonetic at once, which puts speech back in its place in relation to non-phonetic elements' (Ulmer, 1985, p. 98).

Derrida: 'There is no production of anything artistic without touching, usually touching with the hand. But, if I am not wrong, there is no reception or evaluation of a work of art [or 'thesis'] through touching. We evaluate, we enjoy, we experience works of art through seeing, hearing, and tasting and so on but never by touching. It is a strange situation: production is always haptic, so to speak, but the reception and the experience are never haptic as such' (Deconstruction Engaged, 2001, p. 28).

(particularly the figurative band over there →).

2. *The Ridiculous Madman*

The second text will involve the re-writing and re-stylising of a satire I began in 1997 while studying at Flinders University. *The Ridiculous Madman* will blend elements of the picture book, film script, novel, and postcard to create an episodic and dream-like commentary about postmodern life. It will also explore existential aspects of existence, including the discourses of faith and non-faith, morality and immorality, and Bauman's (1995, 1997) postmodern life strategies.

3. *The Manifesto*

The third text will lampoon neo-liberal agendas in education and masquerade as a manifesto. It will take its form from the textbook, reference text, newspaper, and catalogue. It will adopt a sadistic patriarchal posture and address itself to an unknown Sir (hence the *Man* in *Manifesto*). As a teacher, neo-liberal policies have far-reaching implications on my role and agency in teaching theory and practice, curriculum construction, pedagogical orientation, classroom climate, and the moral and ethical dimensions of my work. The sub-text of the *Manifesto* will therefore argue for a libertarian and inclusive pedagogy (i.e. *The Postmodern Pedagogondage*).

All three texts will use and explore a range of (postmodern) theories and practices, with particular emphasis on the *visual*, *verbal*, and *textual* aspects of each text. I am interested in the aesthetics of text production *and* the content, purpose, and audience of text production (i.e. form *and* content; *visual and verbal*; *image and idiom*). This



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the twelve apostles of Jesus, brother to Peter, and patron saint of Scotland (Collins, n.d., p. 55). His feast day (make a note of it) is November 30 (a day I intend to celebrate in the future). Therefore, the name Andrew is not only associated with the terms sword (*épée* and broadsword) and apostle (disciple, preacher, and gospel), but with the term *exegesis*, which is about the critical explanation and interpretation of texts, especially biblical texts (Collins, n.d.; Macquarie, 2006). More generally, an exegesis is an 'explanatory note or gloss' and/or an 'expository discourse' (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989a, p. 524). HERMENEUTICS.

The term *eisegesis* (i.e. into, *eis* + interpretation, *egesis*: to guide) adds another dimension again to this etymology, since it entails the interpretation of scripture *using one's own ideas* (Collins, n.d., p. 533), which suggests, by default, that the term *exegesis* is about the critical interpretation of scripture using *someone else's ideas*. More specifically, *eisegesis* is about the interpretation of a text "in a way that is biased by one's own ideas" (New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles, 1993, p. 790) or "by reading into [a text] one's own ideas" (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989a, p. 102). The implication is that an *exegete* (i.e. a person skilled in making exegeses) interprets texts on the basis of convention, orthodoxy, and common sense (i.e. sacred lore and mindless habit), whereas the *eisegetical interpreter* (i.e. the *eisegete* [sic] or allegorical exegete) interprets texts on the basis of idiosyncratic and allegorical readings (i.e. counter-perspectives and critical literacies) (New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles, 1993; Oxford English Dictionary, 1989a) HEURISTICS. In fact, from the 1870s onwards critics began to condemn the

eisegesis as a subversive form of scriptural interpretation, whereby interpreters were accused of using Scripture to justify their own pious thoughts and fancies—the fear being that such interpretations would empty history of meaning and delude students (of Scripture) and lead them astray (Oxford English Dictionary, 1989a, p. 102). It seems, therefore, that the *eisegesis* can be used in a habit-shattering and seditious manner (i.e. *to read and write against the grain*) or in a self-deluding and myth-making manner (i.e. *to escape into fantasy*). Whatever the case, it seems that conserva-

Positionality

This text commits many of the crimes it condemns in other texts: exclusivity, deception, omission, bias, prejudice, inaccessibility, inconsistency, and so on. All texts, in this sense, are political, ideological, and socially situated. No text is neutral or value-free.

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"Learning, the educational process, has long been associated only with the glum. We speak of the 'serious' student. Our time presents a unique opportunity for learning by means of humor—a perceptive or incisive joke can be more meaningful than platitudes lying between two covers" (McLuhan & Fiore, *The Medium is the Message*, 1967, p. 10).

Pedagond = evolving-polyvalent-hybrid-discontinuous-ludic identities

“Derrida similarly elaborates a tripartite script – picto-ideo-phonographic – which, in recent books, consists of ... a discursive commentary (the phonetic level); examples interpolated (‘pinned’) into the discourse (the ideographic element); and ‘found’ pictorial material (such as artworks ... or the post card...)” (Ulmer, 1985, p. 99).

Alternatively, if I turn these texts, or some of these texts, into cybertexts then clearly I will need to learn as much about constructing electronic texts as I will need to know about constructing paper-based texts. This will mean doubling the amount of texts I make and doubling the amount of work I do. Whilst I would dearly love to make both kinds of text, the reality might be that resources and time prevent this ambition.

roughly translates into Ulmer's (1985) 'picto-ideo-phonographic' writing and the re-introduction of the *non-verbal* into the text-making and meaning-making process.

Presentation *Word-thing presentations*

Ideally, I will present my finished text products as *artefacts* (or *cybertexts*) rather than theses. Institutional guidelines, however, may require me to submit each artefact as a bound thesis despite the intentions of the research. This need not stop me producing the 'idealised' and 'authentic' artefact versions for myself. I will therefore endeavour to submit each product in both forms (e.g. the *EiseJesus* as both an A3 illuminated manuscript and a conventionally bound A4 thesis; *The Ridiculous Madman* as both an A5 book and an A4 thesis; and the *Manifesto* as both a B5 textbook and an A4 thesis). This will mean submitting 24 text products (3 x 4 x 2 = 24).

Again, something of the politics of representation is raised here: How do I reconcile my needs as a learner with those of the establishment that supports me, whereby I produce 'actual' text products rather than bound theses? After all, readers (viewers) are unlikely to react to the 'aesthetics' of a text that is quite clearly presented as a thesis. Hence, it is vitally important that I make the text products as planned (e.g. by self-publishing and self-binding) and actually go through the *process* of producing and collating finished text products (e.g. editing, typesetting, cover design, layout, font selection, foreword, back cover, illustrations, binding, etc). I will therefore need to research 'book production' and 'publishing' as part of this project. And whilst examiners can 'assess' the A4 bound theses, I also want them to *hold, feel, smell, and see* the actual finished products. I will therefore need to argue for this type of ex-



HAPTIC RECEPTION

tives in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were fearful of the counter-hegemonic and revolutionary potential of the eisegesis, particularly its allegorical and thought-provoking dimensions. Given all this, the term *eisegesis* is not only more applicable to my socially critical purposes: textually, pedagogically, and philosophically, but to the purposes of the university assessment process, which demands some level of 'originality' and personal input from the maker (i.e. me, as the student and candidate)—even if, from a poststructuralist perspective, my thoughts are little more than the barrage of thoughts (from out there) that have gone into constructing me (in here) as a person (and a text) over the years [sources of this kind of thinking unknown]. Nonetheless, it is this unique arrangement of texts, this bricolage of selves (*me-texts, me-bits, mystories, and iPods*), which I intend to draw upon here to further my *eisegetical* pursuits. For whilst I may be socially constructed, a pastiche of discourses and practices unique to my social context, small changes in information in my brain (as distinct from your brain) will have enormous ramifications on the knowledge and ideas that result (i.e. a Butterfly Effect).

The term *anagoge* (i.e. a lifting up), in turn, adds another dimension again to this meaning-making process. Rather than restrict interpretation to literal or commonsensical interpretations (as favoured by the traditional exegete), an anagogy extends its borders to include *spiritual* and *allegorical* interpretations of sacred texts (Collins, n.d., p. 52), much like the eisegesis. This way, when blended, the anagoge and eisegesis can offer an extended and polyvocal critical perspective (i.e. the anagogical eisegesis); a kaleidoscopic perspective that encourages alternative reading practices, welcomes alternative spiritualities, and helps students to develop their own ideas and interpretive capabilities. In fact, anagogical and eisegetical texts welcome and celebrate counter-readings. (Note, too, that I am employing an anagogical and eisegetical framework here to fashion a favourable etymological reading of the terms anagoge and eisegesis—*so buyer beware*). I am appropriating these terms and extending their etymologies for my own disruptive, meaning-making, purposes: a strategy I mean to make use in the pages ahead (i.e. term-growing, term-blending, and term-making: *neologising*). The first term I would like to grow, blend, and make combines *eis* (into) + *Jesus* (God) to form 'eiseJesus' (i.e. *into God, into understanding, in the blood*) because it is homophonically identical to eisegesis (and why not?).

'The method of our time is to use not a single but multiple models for exploration...' (McLuhan & Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage*, 1967, p. 69).

Derrida's "work depends on neologisms to displace the sedimentations of 'ordinary language,' which are the sedimentations of logocentrism" (Hahn, *On Derrida*, 2002, p. 46).

Applied grammarology, according to Ulmer (1985), collapses discipline into invention (p. 188) and undermines the distinction (and opposition) between critical-theoretical reflection and creative practice (p. 225). Thus, applied grammarology is the meeting point of non-verbal and verbal systems (p. 298) and combines rigour and play in learning and scholarship (p. 236). Grammarological writing breaks with the investiture of the book and linear-temporal writing (p. 13).

In this sense, the opposition between the 'exegesis' and 'creative-product' – between the supposedly 'academic' and 'non-academic' – collapses, as evidenced in this project and the three 'creative' texts produced, all of which build on the 'eisegetical' nature of *this* text while speaking for themselves. No text is privileged in this trilogy: all three are 'research' and 'creative' texts even if *this* text, as the eisegesis, is the one most 'academic' in appearance.

Be warned, I wouldn't be surprised if the 'creative' products turn around and begin critiquing the 'eisegesis,' thereby reversing the usual exegesis → creative text trajectory. And why in God's name not?

amination given that 'idealised' and 'authentic' text products are what this project is all about.

The most radical feature of this EiseJesus is that it comes before, not after, the creative products it endeavours to inform. Most exegeses attempt to 'explain' the texts they follow, whereas this exegesis sets out to 'generate' textual activity – not to critique it. As such, this EiseJesus sets the stage for further habit-shattering textual experiments and considers itself one of the creative products rather than an overseer of creative products. It is the first rather than last step in the textual metamorphosis process. It sets the example.

The very first myth and prejudice this text sets out to de-mythologise and dis-qualify is that the 'exegesis' represents the 'real' academic work while the 'creative text' represents the 'unreal,' 'surreal,' 'illegitimate,' and 'non-academic' work. In fact, a critique of the term 'exegesis' reveals that it—and not its victim—is the subservient and poor un-thinking cousin of invention and not the other way round. It's the exegesis that uses the hermeneutic mode and the creative text (and eisegesis) that uses the heuristic mode.

The logocentrism of the university, which places the exegesis on a higher footing than the creative product, is consequently undermined by having the EiseJesus join the ranks of the products it no-longer means to annihilate by standing over or speaking for. No, this text speaks for itself and not for the texts it considers its equals. If anything, it means to help free its allies from the tyranny of (hermeneutic) oppression while freeing itself from the tyranny of judgement.

So speaks the EiseJesus, the heurist.

Undoing the 'exegesis' / 'artwork' hierarchy: by making texts *both* at once.



EXEGESIS
ARTWORK

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Note, too, that anagoge, eisegesis, and exegesis are all about the interpretation of *biblical* texts (holy words and holy images), not works of art and creative writings (unholy words and images), although the two discourses may well be more alike than dissimilar in the end (as all texts are). In this case the texts under review are particularly sacred to me—as *mystories* (Ulmer, 1989), *mytexts*, and *my-myths*. Typically, *mystories* are recognisably **autobiographical** by presenting first-person perspectives and self-reflexive commentaries, although in this instance I mean to present texts that are *not* (always) recognisably autobiographical since they are presented through alias narrators and other textual personas (such as the writing voice used here). And given that every text I produce is ultimately about me, whether I disguise this fact or not through third-person perspectives, quasi-objective academic discourses, or other textual tricks and tropes, I still present these texts as layered autobiographies—as *mystories*—because they are ultimately about me even when I try to sever such links. I simply adopt different guises, voices, and perspectives—different *selves*—to further my meaning-making endeavours. Shape-shifting (a term I owe to Janette Turner Hospital) has long been a hallmark of my relationship with the world (and the word, and the text). Make no mistake about it, the ego (a term I owe to Eckhart Tolle) is never far away from the text, however well disguised and neutral that text appears. This goes for all texts.

autobiography *n* an account of a person's life written by that person.

(Collins Australian Dictionary, 2005, p. 45)

The term *miller*, too, is **etymologically** relevant. A *miller*, as we know, is a person who keeps, operates, or works in a mill (Collins, n.d., p. 978), and *to mill* is to grind, press, or pulverise grain, fruit, coffee, etc., or to cut or roll metal (Collins, n.d., p. 978)—activities, alas, associated with bricolage, iconoclasm, and re-searching. To *mill about*, I might add, is to move about in a confused and lost manner, which is *this* bricoleur through and through (Collins, n.d., p. 978). A *miller* is also a kind of moth, an edible fungus, and a kind of dramatist, and a *miller's thumb* is a small flattened fish with a big head that

etymology *n.* 1. the study of the sources and development of words and morphemes.

(Collins, n.d., p. 524)

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“Return inquiry’ (*Rückfrage*) is a trope [Edmund] Husserl uses to express the activity of reactivating the tradition one inherits in order to test and confirm it by ‘sense investigations’ [phenomenology]” (Hahn, *On Derrida*, 2002, p. 50).

'Deconstruction emphasises the visual-verbal Writing' (Ulmer, 1985, p. 99).

'In his later writings, McGann [*The Textual Condition*, 1991] has stressed also the material features of a book including its typography, paper, format, and even pricing and advertising, as cooperative with its verbal element in generating its total cultural significance' (Abrams, *Glossary of Literary Terms*, 2005, p. 327).

Ideology

Why do I want to make these particular artefacts / texts?

'But when a writer plans something new, and conceives a different kind of reader, he wants to be, not a market analyst, cataloguing expressed demands, but, rather, a philosopher, who senses the patterns of the *Zeitgeist*. He wants to reveal to his public what it *should* want, even if it does not know it. He wants to reveal the reader to himself (Eco, *Reflections on 'The Name of the Rose'*, 1985, p. 14).

1. To position myself as an *artist-researcher* and *bricoleur* (i.e. collagist, artist, inventor, amateur, etc) rather than a straight-out writer (i.e. academic, essayist, expert, etc).
2. To reconcile my artistic interests with my academic interests; to express myself as both an artist and a researcher; and to defend my right to occupy spaces outside those traditionally offered to students (and teachers).
3. To liberate myself from the conventions and habits of traditional research; to cross borders and barriers of thought and experience (Said, as cited in Chambers, 1995); and to occupy in-between and hybrid spaces of self, product, learning, and pedagogy (Anzaldúa, 1987; Finley, 2005; Ulmer, 1985).
4. To create artefacts, artworks, collages, and multimodal texts – not conventional theses. This is as much about 'art' as it is about 'writing' (i.e. extending writing to include the non-verbal).
5. To produce 'messy' hybrid texts which are part art, part social science, part essay, part textbook, part story, part fact, part fiction, part 'made' object, part 'found' object, part planned research, part unplanned research, etc (hybridity).
6. To push the boundaries of the book, artefact, and artwork (interdisciplinarity & intertextuality).
7. To imagine and enact a personal *pedagogy* that can also be adapted to the classroom context (i.e. *The Postmodern Pedagogonage*); to collapse the distinction between art, research, and pedagogy (as Ulmer and Finley might say).



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looks like a thumb (*Collins*, n.d., p. 978). *Millering*, incidentally, is "the work or trade of a miller" (*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989b, p. 781). In a sense, I am *millering* right now, grinding away at terms and concepts to manufacture (personal) meanings.

An *Andrew Miller*, then, is a kind of artist-scholar-butcher-nuisance-preacher who grinds, pulverises, cuts, rolls, and destroys different grains and different materials, in a mechanical, militant, and repetitive manner, with a permanently lost and bewildered air, a dramatic, rancid, and slippery attitude, who works best in the dark, in humus, but who is fatally attracted to the light, particularly when preaching and blasting canons. And these are his better qualities. The best advice I can give to the reader or viewer is to question everything an *Andrew Miller* says and does, for such a creature prides itself on chaos and disruption (thanks, in part, to Garth Boomer), and to **problematise** (refer box) and pulverising (refer dictionary) almost *every-thing* and *every-thought* that comes to (his) hand or mind, particularly *him-self*, but also other texts. Most strangely of all, however, the terms *Andrew Miller* are also *slang terms* used by naval and seafaring types to refer to warships, or ships of war. It seems, therefore, that an *Andrew Miller* is many if not most things, but with special associations to weaponry, religion, and manufacturing, all of which involve the intentional alteration of one thing *into* another, whether that be to dust, death, belief, or commercial product. *Like bricolage. Like eisegesis. Which involve (for me) bastardising texts, ideas, discourses, and practices (just like this). EiseJesus (into God, into meaning, into blood).*

problematise to expose and analyse problems in (something previously assumed to be without problems): to *problematise the current assumptions*. (*Macquarie*, 2006, p. 966)

Andrew *n.* *Naut. slang.* [Male forename.] In full *Andrew Millar* or *Miller*. 1 A ship, esp. a warship. 2 A government authority. 3 The Royal Navy. (Brown, 1993, p. 76)

EiseJesus *n.* *problematise*s the term 'eisegesis' by overtly drawing the spiritual and metaphysical back into the interpretive blend (i.e. into the ménage of re-search). The term is also a *homophone*, meaning that it sounds identical to eisegesis while distorting and hijacking its meaning. The term also engages in bricolage and palimpsest before our very eyes, thereby disrupting and disturbing our common sense reading practice. The term up-sets our visual sense of the word and challenges our taken-for-granted assumptions about where words come from. *Words are not natural objects.* People assemble words for different purposes (e.g. consider *terrorism*). I made the word to *make* sense of the senseless and to pose the question: Is word-making a linguistic offence or an act of participation? Will you, the reader, allow it? (See neologism)

I am using the term 'millering' to describe a personalised type of French deconstruction. I am making my own 'idiosyncratic' type of *millering* practice which is both constructive and destructive simultaneously. For me, this is an appropriate type of creative practice in postmodern times.

'Ambivalence is what all ordering activity is sworn and set and hoped to eliminate. Ambivalence is the *cause* of all ordering concerns... But ambivalence is also the *effect* of ordering bustle. The production of order has its toxic waste...' (Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, 1995, p. 213).

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'... the text of pleasure is a sanctioned Babel [a confusion of noises or voices]' (Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, 1973/1990, p. 4).

'In our sensation-addicted world, ever stronger stimuli are needed

Tabloid Texts / Tabloid Culture

We live in a 3 minute culture. Most people want information and entertainment in bite-size chunks (including me). I will therefore divide my texts into chunks and bands to improve (and disrupt) readability. Evocative prose, discursive commentaries, and stunning graphics will drive these texts (i.e. the picto-ideo-phonographic bands).

Each page will be an aesthetic experience (as you have already seen). There will be inviting space, interesting textual features, intrusions and asides, conflicting texts, cornucopia, and images and extras. I will need to develop a shifting textual lexicon, one that evolves and changes to keep interest levels high. This may mean that no two pages are alike, and that the textual lexicon changes from page to page to keep delivering novelty and surprise. Readers will pick which aspects of the text to engage or ignore (i.e. *tnesis*, as Roland Barthes might say).

Aesthetic Questions

What images will help (disrupt) the prose? What textual extras will help (disrupt) the prose? What layout features will help (disrupt) the prose? What white space will help (disrupt) the prose? What definitions or references are needed? How will the headings look? How do fonts and font sizes alter the aesthetic? What colour is the page? What disruptive texts could be included? Why is there a man standing over there? I will need to think more like a visual artist and designer than an essayist and writer. These texts could be reformatted as cybertexts (which could be the version you are viewing now) but my initial concern is with each text as an object and artefact (which is what this text was at the time of inception).



According to Aarseth (1997), 'ergodic' literature requires non-trivial effort on the part of the 'reader' to traverse the text; in other words, the reader does more than simply turn the page or scroll computer screen. Such a reader / viewer is more deeply involved in the text-building process. In this way, both paper-based and electronic texts can be ergodic in nature.

(*Cybertext: Perspectives on Ergodic Literature*, 1997)

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'... a central feature of postmodernist art forms is the interrogation of their own conditions of existence. ... So things like irony, pastiche, plural coding and eclecticism can seem like ways of having your cake and eating it. ... But if postmodernism puts messages in quotation marks (the *poststructuralist* thinker Jacques Derrida would say it puts them 'under erasure'), that's because it is by definition self-conscious and self-critical. ... For the postmodern text constantly asks: how do I produce meanings? How can I offer a 'true' representation of reality? For whom, and from what position, do I speak?' (Ward, *Postmodernism*, 1997/2003, p. 33).

to keep the attention awake for longer than a fleeting moment.' (Bauman, *Life in Fragments*, 1995, p. 157)

Menu...

An appropriate place to end this introduction (or anti-introduction) is where it began, with the term *épéelst*...

exegesis *n.* critical examination or interpretation, especially of scripture.

(*Macquarie*, 2006, p. 412)

exegesis *n.* explanation or critical interpretation of a text, esp. of the Bible.

(*Collins*, n.d., p. 533)

exegesis *n.* — 1 clarification 2 explanation 3 teaching.

(*Macquarie Budget Thesaurus*, 2004, p. 147)

exegesis *n.* (An) exposition, esp. of Scripture; a gloss, an explanatory note or discourse.

(*New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles*, 1993, p. 878)

exegesis

1. Explanation, exposition (of a sentence, word, etc.); esp. the interpretation of Scripture or a Scriptural passage.
- b. An explanatory note, a gloss.
- c. An expository discourse.

(*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989a, p. 524)

anagoge *n.* allegorical or spiritual interpretation, esp. of sacred works such as the Bible.

(*Collins*, n.d., p. 52)

eisegesis *n.* the interpretation of a text, esp. a biblical text, using one's own ideas.

(*Collins*, n.d., p. 490)

eisegesis *n.* The interpretation of a (scriptural) text in a way that is biased by one's own ideas.

(*New Shorter Oxford English Dictionary: On Historical Principles*, 1993, p. 790)

eisegesis The interpretation of a word or passage (of the Scriptures) by reading into it one's own ideas. Hence *eisegetical*.

(*Oxford English Dictionary*, 1989a, p. 102)

épée *n.* a sword similar to the foil but with a larger guard and a heavier blade of triangular cross section.

(*Collins*, n.d., p. 511)

épéelst *n.* Fencing, one who uses or specializes in using an épée.

(*Collins*, n.d., p. 512)

'At present many Masters and PhD students from creative arts programmes in Australian universities must complete both their creative project and an exegesis in order to satisfy universities' requirements that there be a traditionally recognisable research component in the final thesis. This can involve multiple supervisors and multiple examiners, and often means that such students produce more work than those doing standard theses. It seems clear that the question of redefining notions of academic research has been postponed at this level' (Brophy, *Creativity*, 1998, p.p. 217-218).

GLOSSOLALIA: BRICOLAGE: COLLAGE: PASTICHE: INTERTEXTUALITY ARE ALL HERE

'Applied grammatology is less about deconstruction (of the philosophical tradition), than with the grafting of visual items to texts' (Ulmer, 1985, p. 99).

Doubling:

Derrida's concept of 'doubling' describes an art that crosses over between word and image, sometimes with little differentiation between the two. It also describes the double process by which the artist-poet is being shaped at the same time as self-constructing (*Deconstruction Engaged*, 2001, p. 31).

The Grunge Aesthetic (*messiness*)

Prose texts and visual texts will reflect a 'home-made' (or amateur) philosophy, whereby texts are made and assembled from the resources and processes at hand (e.g. I should not be afraid of making art from biro, pencil, computer graphics, scanned images, collages, photographs, found texts, and other scraps). This epitomises the *Jack-and-Jill-of-all-trades* character of the *bricoleur* as I am imagining it. Texts will not look overly mass produced or commercial. Instead, they will have a DIY (do-it-yourself) quality that says that each text was made by an individual (at home) and not a corporation (in a factory or commercial agency). THESE ARE NOT NEO-LIBERAL ARTEFACTS. They are not mass-producible. Self-critical reflexivity will therefore be a feature of these texts. I am interested in the idea that *anyone* can make texts, images, and art – not just authors, artists, or elite bohemians (Beuys, as cited in Ulmer, 1985). Most children make art and yet most adults do not. Have we all been suckered into believing that only 'artists' make art and that only 'art institutions' have the authority to name artists? Or that only 'publishers' make books and only 'publishing houses' name authors? Am I an artist if I choose to call myself an artist? Am I a bricoleur if I choose to call myself a bricoleur? Y—E—S.

I will not, however, attempt to pass off my images and texts as examples of artistic expertise or perfection. Quite the contrary. They will represent my preparedness to *have a go* – hence my preference for idiosyncratic and raw texts. Given this *do-it-yourself* and *have-a-go* ethos, I would not want an 'expert' from the South Australian School of Art (for instance) to come and judge the 'quality' of my artwork – for I would surely fail. I simply want to claim the right to express myself through alternative



¹The postmodern mind is reconciled to the idea that the messiness of the human predicament is here to stay. That is, in the broadest of outlines, what can be called postmodern wisdom' (Bauman, *Postmodern Ethics*, 1993/1995, p. 245).

Crafting continued: 10.4.07

Crafting continued: 11.4.07

Each 'crafting' date indicates when crafting, drafting, and editing took place; not the level of crafting that took place. Over the first 8-10 days, for instance, drafting and crafting was at its most prolific and dramatic. After this period the level of textual change tended to become less dramatic and more specific. Ultimately, these columns reveal the frequency of my visits to the text / artefact to 'get it right.' Few texts, it seems, reveal their manufacturing process; this one does, in passing, to show how very constructed a text can be. This page itself went through 20 drafts on the 18th and 19th of March, 2007, and still wasn't finished.

Many readers and viewers will wonder *what went wrong*: so much time and effort and the text still stinks. That's how heartbreaking the creative process can be—where the maker (e.g. author, artist, bricoleur, designer, etc) works for years on a product only to have it dismissed in a few merciless seconds. The same happens with novels, paintings, films, songs, and all products. But there are other 'currencies' besides acclaim and money to make these endeavours worthwhile, such as learning and creating for their own sakes.

This begs the question: Is it the *intrinsic learning* or the *extrinsic qualification* – or both, that motivates the average PhD student? Does it matter? And could you tell the difference anyway?

Note, too, that just as

much time and effort went into the *aesthetic* of this artefact (i.e. designing, stylising, formatting, and imaging) as the *prose* that ultimately legitimises it (i.e. by giving it access to the assessment process and the rewards and qualifications on offer). This poses another question: If I invest one year on the aesthetic of a text (i.e. the layout, format, style, artwork, and photographs) and one year on the prose (i.e. the reading and writing), will my visual and creative learning be as highly valued (by you) as my written and verbal learning? Will it be valued at all? *Is the first year wasted?*

In all likelihood, I will need to do twice as much work as the average prose-producer to get the same reward, even if my visual literacies and visual texts are exemplary. Such is life when different literacies and textualities are arranged into *logocentric* hierarchies, with prose texts valued more highly than visual and multimodal texts. There may indeed be more visual texts in the world than prose texts, or at least more visual texts consumed in the average day by the average person than prose texts, but this is unlikely to change the academy's preference for prose texts: prose texts made into essays, theses, and dissertations, with titles, paragraphs, headings, and bibliographies, rather than visual texts, paintings, cartoons, montages, hypertexts, and films—or even hybrid artefacts like this one.

And even when risqué artefacts are admitted into the assessment process, such texts will still need to perform all the requisite

duties that traditional texts did/do—and then some. The dominant literacy will remain the same: for it is the literacy of the academy. It is the dominant discourse.

It is in knowing all this that I persist nonetheless, often spending months making visual texts when other students are making prose texts, knowing full well that my time could be better spent *if* the qualification (i.e. the PhD) were my only aim.

Visual learners, visual thinkers, and visual writers are disadvantaged by the mainstream university system. Such learners are usually directed to the 'art school' or 'TAFE College' where people like me are then directed back to the 'university' and 'academic' system, and never quite at home in either. These in-between and chimerical types, these *nuisances*, must evolve their hybrid capacities to survive the hegemonic divide. And that's the challenge – the challenge of finding safe places to be whatever type of learner, thinker, or producer we are or could be despite logocentric, systemic, and ideological restraints. This is why I write *visually*: because this is how I think and learn; and *this is what motivates me*.

Crafting continued: 2.5.07

Crafting continued: 18.5.07

Crafting continued: 23.5.07

Crafting continued: 23.8.07

Crafting continued:

Total number of hardcopy d/crafts: dozens

'Issues of assessment in creative writing courses must remain a sore point, a place of debate and uncertainty if these course are to retain some commitment to the unpredictability and open-endedness of creative projects' (Brophy, *Creativity*, 1998, pp. 242-243).

Derrida: 'Every work is a work of mourning, that is, a way of leaving a trace, of abandoning what we are saying and doing and leaving something' (*Deconstruction Engaged*, 2001, p. 44).

PART OF THE SAME PICTO-IDEO-PHONOGRAPHIC, ARCHE-WRITING PROCESS...